

Committee Approves E-911, Broadband Mapping Legislation

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NEWS RELEASE

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

For Immediate Release: October 30, 2007

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Washington, D.C. – The Committee on Energy and Commerce approved two bipartisan communications bills today by voice vote in a full committee markup session.

H.R. 3403, the “911 Modernization and Public Safety Act of 2007,” sponsored by Rep. Bart Gordon (D-TN), ensures that consumers using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service are able to reach 911 in the same manner as landline and mobile phone users. H.R. 3919, the “Broadband Census of America Act of 2007,” sponsored by Reps. Edward Markey (D-MA), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, and John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, provides for a comprehensive study on the nationwide availability of broadband Internet service. This bill would improve the availability of broadband nationwide by enhancing data collection on the availability and quality of Internet service across the country, by creating a map that shows where access is lacking, and by assisting communities in increasing local broadband deployment.

“These bills signify important steps Congress is taking in response to evolving technology,” said Dingell. “Consumers will have access to emergency operators regardless of the type of service they use to dial 911 and our ability to ensure that all Americans have access to affordable broadband services will be greatly improved. The Internet should be available for all Americans, not just the fortunate few who happen to live in the right neighborhoods.”

“Today’s Broadband Census of America Act reflects the growing consensus — if not unanimity — around the fact that current data collection methods used by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) are inadequate and highly flawed,” said Markey. “We must have more reliable information about broadband deployment and consumer adoption as a first step in developing any comprehensive blueprint for America’s broadband future. If America hopes to catch up with the rest of the broadband world, we can’t have policymakers flying blind with respect to where service is and isn’t deployed, the speeds of such services, and consumer adoption rates.”

“H.R. 3403 is a common sense public safety bill,” said Gordon. “Regardless of where you live or what phone technology you use, you should be able to reach 911 during an emergency. This bill gives us an opportunity to incorporate Internet phones into the nation’s 911 system, modernize 911 for the digital age and improve 911 services for the deaf community.”

The bills are now reported to the full House for consideration.

On May 17, 2007, the Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet held a hearing on the broadband mapping legislation. On September 19, 2007, the Subcommittee held a hearing on the 911 legislation. Both measures were unanimously approved by the Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet on October 10, 2007. Please visit <http://energycommerce.house.gov> to view testimony from the hearings or to view the webcasts.

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Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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